SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress | September 30, 1999, 5:50 p.m.
1st Session | **Vote No. 302** | Page S-11716 Temp. Record

LABOR-HHS-EDUCATION/Social Services Block Grant Increase

SUBJECT: **Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000 . . . S. 1650. Specter motion to table the Graham amendment No. 1821.**

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE FAILED, 39-57

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1650, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000, will provide $324.2 billion in new budget authority, which is $22.531 billion more than provided in fiscal year (FY) 1999 and is $911.0 million less than requested. This amount includes advance discretionary and mandatory appropriations and $9.902 billion in spending from trust funds. Budget authority for fiscal year 2000 discretionary spending will total $84.018 billion.

The Graham amendment would increase the proposed $1.05 billion appropriation for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Program to its current level of $2.38 billion. All of the increase would be provided as an advance appropriation for FY 2001. The amendment would further provide that the mandatory spending cap for the program would be $2.38 billion for fiscal year 2000 (see the note below).

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. After debate, Senator Specter moved to table the Graham amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

NOTE: A Graham second-degree perfecting amendment was pending at the time of the vote. That amendment would strike all after the first word of the underlying amendment and would add alternative text. It would increase the proposed $1.05 billion appropriation for the Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Program to its current level of $2.38 billion. All of the increase would be provided as an advance appropriation for FY 2001. The amendment would further provide that the mandatory spending cap for the program would be $3.03 billion for fiscal year 2001. (The SSBG Program is a mandatory spending program with a fixed cap. Reductions in that cap result in savings that are scored as savings under the discretionary spending cap; increases in that cap count as increased spending under the discretionary spending cap. The bill, as reported, will lower the SSBG cap from $2.38 billion

(See other side)

YEAS (39)			NAYS (57)			NOT VOTING (4)	
Republicans (38 or 75%)		**Democrats (1 or 2%)**	**Republicans (13 or 25%)**	**Democrats (44 or 98%)**		**Republicans (4)**	**Democrats (0)**
Allard	Hagel	Feingold	Abraham	Akaka	Kennedy	Chafee-[2]	
Ashcroft	Helms		Bennett	Baucus	Kerrey	Mack-[2]	
Bond	Inhofe		Collins	Bayh	Kerry	McCain-[2]	
Brownback	Kyl		DeWine	Biden	Kohl	Thomas-[2]	
Bunning	Lott		Grassley	Bingaman	Landrieu		
Burns	Lugar		Hatch	Boxer	Lautenberg		
Campbell	McConnell		Hutchinson	Breaux	Leahy		
Cochran	Murkowski		Hutchison	Bryan	Levin		
Coverdell	Nickles		Jeffords	Byrd	Lieberman		
Craig	Roberts		Roth	Cleland	Lincoln		
Crapo	Sessions		Santorum	Conrad	Mikulski		
Domenici	Shelby		Smith, Gordon	Daschle	Moynihan		
Enzi	Smith, Bob (I)		Snowe	Dodd	Murray		
Fitzgerald	Specter			Dorgan	Reed		
Frist	Stevens			Durbin	Reid		
Gorton	Thompson			Edwards	Robb		
Gramm	Thurmond			Feinstein	Rockefeller		
Grams	Voinovich			Graham	Sarbanes		
Gregg	Warner			Harkin	Schumer		
				Hollings	Torricelli		
				Inouye	Wellstone		
				Johnson	Wyden		

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:
1—Official Business
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:
AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

to $1.05 billion. The Graham second-degree amendment would keep that reduction but would increase the cap to $3.03 billion for FY 2001 (it would increase it to $3.03 billion because the cap for FY 2001 is currently set at $1.7 billion, not $1.05 billion). In other words, there will be less SSBG spending this year and scored savings under the discretionary budget cap, and next year there will be mandatory spending of $3.03 billion for the SSBG program, and the increase will count under the discretionary cap.) After the tabling vote on the underlying amendment, the Graham second-degree amendment, and then the underlying amendment, as amended, were adopted by voice votes.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

There are a lot of different ways of adding up the money in this bill for discretionary spending. When all is said and done, this bill is going to allow $91.7 billion for program spending this year, which will be a $4 billion increase over last year. The bill will add $2.3 billion to education spending, will add $2 billion for health research, and will make a substantial commitment to reduce juvenile crime. At the same time, we had to come up with funding for the other 300 programs covered by this bill and stay within the $84 billion budget authority allocation. One of the areas where we made a reduction was in the SSBG Program. We favor that program. It serves a wide variety of very useful social welfare purposes, it gives the States great flexibility to target the funds to their areas of greatest need, and it is cost-effective compared to other Federal welfare programs. Nevertheless, we have proposed cutting spending for this program because we believe States will make up the difference. The Federal Government is not flush with cash; Congress has already committed to spending every penny that will be raised, including every penny of the expected surplus. If it commits to spending more money, that money will have to come out of the Social Security surplus. States, on the other hand, have ample resources. They are running large on-budget surpluses, they are receiving billions of dollars in new revenue from the tobacco settlement, and their successful welfare reforms have left them with billions of dollars in excess welfare funds (Congress specifically gave them authority to transfer those excess funds to the SSBG Program). The States already run all of the welfare programs that are paid for with grants from this program, they fully understand the value of those welfare programs, and they have ample funds, including excess welfare funds from the Federal Government, with which they can pay to continue those programs. In contrast, if we provided full funding for the grants, we would not have enough funds to increase spending on Federal health research and education programs, and States would not pick up the slack. Our colleagues say that they are not satisfied with this arrangement; they want the Federal Government to increase spending by another $1.3 billion for the SSBG Program. We cannot support that proposal. Many Senators are already bothered by the large increase in program spending that is in this bill, and, if we increase spending any more, we may not have the votes to pass it. It is irresponsible to say that the Federal Government will pay for everything. We support the priorities in this bill and thus support the motion to table.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The Graham amendment would restore the massive cut this bill will make in the Title XX Social Services Block Grant Program. Grants under that program are used by States to fund a wide variety of social welfare programs, including programs for foster care, adoption, counseling, day care, home-delivered meals, education and training, residential treatment, child and adult protective services, services for at-risk youth, legal services, independent living services, and housing. No one disputes the value of those programs, nor does anyone dispute that the arrangement allows each State to target resources to its particular areas of greatest need. Further, no one disputes that in many cases, the programs funded by these grants, such as for independent living, end up saving money, because without them the beneficiaries would be forced to receive care from more expensive programs, such as nursing-home care paid through Medicaid. The Appropriations Committee suggested that States might make up the difference using funds from the tobacco settlement. That suggestion is unacceptable. The Federal Government should have no say over the expenditure of those funds because it had no part in the legal actions that resulted in the settlement. A final point that must be made is that, if we agree to this cut, we will be breaking our word to the States. When we passed the welfare reform bill a couple of years ago we promised that we would continue Title XX funding at the $2.38 billion level. States are counting on that money being available. We urge our colleagues to keep their commitment to Title XX by opposing the motion to table.